

Day Resolution. I thank my cosponsors and those who recognize this important Federal holiday.

H. Res. 1182 is to celebrate Juneteenth, but I was pleased to be the first Member of Congress, after years of introducing resolutions, to introduce the actual language of the Federal holiday signed by President Biden on June 17, 2021.

What is Juneteenth? It is a recognition of one of America's original sins, the slaves that were held over 200 years, and the brutality that they experienced but the freedom they experienced on June 19, 1865.

We can come together as a Nation to celebrate freedom in many, many ways. I am delighted that over the weekend in Houston and Galveston, we will be lifting up our voices of celebration, but we know that there are next steps.

As I have been introducing the resolution on Juneteenth, I also commend my colleagues to move forward on H.R. 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. Again, what are reparations? It is healing, it is restoration, it is repair. We look forward to responding to the indicia in African-American communities that should be fixed. Happy Juneteenth, America. Let's celebrate together.

AMERICA'S ASTRONOMICAL NATIONAL DEBT

(Mr. WESTERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, our current national debt is not only huge, it is astronomical. As of today, the national debt exceeds over \$30 trillion. To put that in perspective, that amount in \$100 bills laid side by side would circle the Earth over 1,167 times. If stacked, it would reach the International Space Station 80 times.

The debt crisis is truly out of this world, and yet my colleagues across the aisle would rather spend even more money on unnecessary programs with unrealistic goals. Effects of the debt are already being felt in the form of record-high inflation and gas prices, but perhaps the greatest tragedy is that it will be our children and our children's children who will ultimately foot the bill.

RACIAL JUSTICE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise. And I rise today with an expression of gratitude and great appreciation.

I thank the many persons who voted for H.R. 2543, the Financial Services

Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Economic Justice Act. I rise to thank persons for this because I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to manage the bill on the floor.

The Honorable MAXINE WATERS is the sponsor of this piece of legislation. It is a compilation of some 13 bills that were used and packaged so that we could bring about some racial justice in this country. Racial justice that is long overdue, I might add.

The Honorable MAXINE WATERS, but for her, I can say without reservation, hesitation, or equivocation, this bill would not have come to fruition. She has been a champion for those who have been left out, left behind, locked out, those that I label as being among the least, the last, and the lost.

The least, those who don't inherit a legacy of wealth but, rather, a legacy of poverty. The least, those are persons who are still finding themselves living in the streets of life.

The last, those are the last hired and the first fired.

The lost, those who are lost in the richest country in the world, but lost perhaps in chemical consumption, drugs, if you will, lost because of mental issues, but they are lost in the richest country in the world. She has been a champion for them.

I will always be grateful to her for working with me to help me to acquire a position on the Financial Services Committee. I think that probably but for her, I might not have the position that I have. So I know that she is not doing well today, but she will be back, and I want her to know today that I am appreciative for the many opportunities that I have acquired by virtue of her being there at the right time when these opportunities were available.

I also thank the Members who had those bills, the 13 bills: Mrs. JOYCE BEATTY, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. TORRES, and of course, Ms. WATERS, had a bill as well. I had two bills associated with this package.

This package, the Financial Services Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Economic Justice Act, why is it needed? Why is it needed on this day some few days away from Juneteenth? And I celebrate Juneteenth, by the way. I commend my colleague, Ms. JACKSON LEE, for her work on Juneteenth.

I knew the father of Juneteenth, Al Edwards. Al Edwards was a State representative in Texas, and he was a person who was tenacious about Juneteenth. It was his legislation that passed the Texas House and Senate and was signed by the Governor of the State of Texas, making Juneteenth a holiday at a time when, quite frankly, people thought that it was impossible to get it done.

Al Edwards, the father of Juneteenth, I always remember him, a dear friend. We celebrated Juneteenth together on many occasions. We traversed the State together. He was one of my supporters. I know his family.

His brother was a banker, Redick Edwards. He was my banker, as a matter of fact. So I have a relationship with this family. I want the world to know that I am appreciative for what he did to lay the foundation for Juneteenth as a holiday at the national level.

I also express my appreciation for what Juneteenth is all about. General Gordon Granger came into Galveston, Texas, in 1865. The Emancipation Proclamation had been signed. The war had ended, but in Texas, the slaves were not accorded their freedom. Some people say that the word hadn't reached Texas. I differ. The word reached Texas, but the slaveholders saw those slaves as personal property, and they saw no reason to give up their personal property simply because Mr. Lincoln signed an Emancipation Proclamation or simply because the war was over. That was their personal property.

It is said that someone was sent, an envoy, if you will, to make it known to people in Texas that the slaves had been freed. This is prior to General Gordon Granger arriving in Galveston, Texas in 1865. Well, they said that that person didn't quite get the message across, and one can well understand why, given the behavior of Texas, a State that seceded from the Union and also seceded from Mexico because of slavery.

□ 1315

They were recalcitrant—and that is being kind—about the desire to maintain slavery. But President Lincoln sent General Gordon Granger.

To say that he sent General Gordon Granger, quite frankly, is an incomplete statement. He sent General Gordon Granger and 2,000 troops. General Gordon Granger, being the wise man that he was, brought those troops with him, but they also had some friends with them. They had Mr. Winchester, Smith & Wesson. They were well equipped to present this message to the slaveholders. When it was presented with 2,000 troops who were well armed, it was received.

It was the next year that the first Juneteenth celebration took place. That was in 1866, the first celebration.

This is what Al Edwards shared with me about Juneteenth, the actual moniker, the name for the holiday. It was his position that it became known as "Juneteenth" because there was some question about the date that General Gordon Granger arrived, within the minds of the slaves, whether it was on the 18th or the 19th. Rather than continue a debate about the actual date, it simply became "Juneteenth," and folks can fill in the blank as they choose. 1866 was a big celebration of Juneteenth, a celebration of freedom.

Again, I commend the father, Al Edwards, and I commend my colleague, Ms. JACKSON LEE, for her stellar work here in Congress to work Juneteenth through to the point that it is now a Federal holiday. I commend both of